

1 my questioning there is any -- you have any
2 misunderstanding or you don't understand certain things
3 that I'm asking you, ask me to repeat it and I'll be glad
4 to do so, okay?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. If for any occasion you wish to go off the
7 record, let me know and I will ask Miss Grill to go off
8 the record and we will accommodate you.

9 A. Very good.

10 Q. Are there any questions regarding how we're
11 going to proceed?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. Would you state your full name for the
14 record, Mr. Prather?

15 A. Ross Clayton Prather.

16 Q. And your -- And would you state your
17 professional background for the record?

18 A. I'm an attorney.

19 Q. And you practice in Pennsylvania?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. And you currently serve on the school
22 board?

23 A. Correct.

24 Q. When were you first elected to the school
25 board?



1 A. I was elected in 2001.

2 Q. Okay. Did you serve in any elected position
3 prior to the school board?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. And your educational background?

6 A. I have a Bachelor's of Arts from the College of
7 Wooster. I have a JD from Drake University Law School,
8 and I have a Master's of Arts in teaching from Brown
9 University.

10 Q. Are you aware of the lawsuit that's filed by
11 Miss Wagner?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. When did you first become aware of that?

14 A. Sometime in the last year or two.

15 Q. And it was in your capacity as a member of the
16 board that it came to your attention?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. I see. And did -- Having the knowledge of the
19 lawsuit, has that -- have you done -- have you done -- is
20 that -- has that changed your life in any way as a member
21 of the board?

22 MR. KUHAR: I object to the question.

23 Changed his life in any way as a member of the board
24 is not relevant. It doesn't seek to lead to
25 relevant information. It probably is litigation

1 A. By --

2 Q. The demographics shown there?

3 A. Now in the paragraph that I read there are no
4 demographics. The paragraph above it indicates 300 out of
5 which -- 307 students are of African decent out of 4,300.

6 I'm certainly not troubled by a number -- I mean
7 that's just a percentage of how many African American are
8 in the Crawford County School District.

9 I mean the number is what it is. I don't think
10 there's any value associated to that particular number.
11 That's Meadville's demographics and Meadville and
12 Cochran's demographics.

13 Are you referring to some other number?

14 Q. No, that number in that article. That article,
15 what do you --

16 A. I want to make sure I'm reading the same thing
17 that you're asking.

18 Q. Yeah, the number --

19 A. It says that out of 4,300 kids in Crawford
20 Central 307 are of African decent.

21 Q. Yes.

22 A. I mean, is your question whether I think we
23 should have more African decent children or less?

24 Q. Well, in the context of the article he writes,
25 do you agree with him, disagree with him, what he's saying

1 about the --

2 A. I think that --

3 Q. -- About the racial composition of the teaching
4 staff and in the school district?

5 A. I'm not exactly sure what his point is from the
6 one paragraph that I've read. He starts out by saying, on
7 principle he's against --

8 Q. And do --

9 MR. KUHAR: He's trying to answer.

10 A. On principle he's against affirmative action.
11 So I disagree with him there, I'm for affirmative action.

12 If his point is that Crawford Central is not doing
13 what it can to recruit, hire and retain minority
14 applicants, then I simply agree, that's a meritorious
15 position, but I disagree with his conclusion that we're
16 not doing enough. And I don't know if he really knows
17 what we've done. I don't know, Mr. DiAngi.

18 Q. So you're saying you think the school district
19 is doing enough? You're satisfied with the school
20 district in this regard?

21 A. From what I know of the school district's
22 efforts to recruit -- I'll use his words, hire and retain
23 --

24 Q. Right.

25 A. -- Minority applicants, from what I know, we

1 are taking substantial steps.

2 Q. Okay. As a member of the board can you
3 articulate specific -- what you're doing or have done?

4 A. I can tell you that the board has discussed it,
5 the board has indicated that we would like to see more
6 applicants, we would like to see more teachers and
7 administrators and staff who are of -- of a minority
8 background.

9 And I can only speak for myself, I'm satisfied that
10 the administration that we have spoken to is listening and
11 doing what they can. It's a -- It's a challenge. It's a
12 challenging request that we've made to them.

13 Q. Did you ever receive from Mrs. Wagner -- Have
14 you, regarding her efforts to obtain a full-time teaching
15 position (indicating)?

16 A. Have I ever seen correspondence?

17 Q. Yeah, received letters.

18 A. I think I received two letters indicating that
19 she would like to be considered for some positions at
20 Crawford Central. I think they were mailed directly to me
21 from Miss Wagner.

22 Q. You have --

23 A. That's not my only knowledge on the subject,
24 but that's the most recent thing that's come to my
25 attention.

1 I'll ask, if a substitute teacher teaches for four years,
2 and two years it's 90 percent of the time, and has a batch
3 of good evaluations, positive evaluations from those of
4 whom she has substituted, and other otherwise certified
5 and qualified, do you find it strange then that while she
6 continuously applies for full-time positions, she's
7 continuously rejected and rebuffed? Do you find that
8 strange?

9 A. I don't think our school board has ever placed
10 an objective test on hiring. A person doesn't have to
11 just sit in a category for a certain number of years. The
12 school board has always taken the position that the
13 administration will determine whether or not the person is
14 qualified for the position, and if so, then the person
15 most qualified for the position within the rules and
16 policies will receive the position.

17 Q. Do you, as a member of the board -- You, as a
18 member of the board, oversee the implementation of the --
19 of the compliance -- of the district's compliance with the
20 civil rights laws?

21 A. It depends on what you mean by oversee.

22 Q. I mean are you involved in -- I mean supervise
23 or oversee or whichever word you choose. I think I make
24 myself clear.

25 Does the board set and simply except what the --

1 what it's told by the administrative staff, or does it
2 call the staff out and say, look, I'm going to -- I want
3 to review the employment records, I want to see the EEO
4 submissions to the EEOC. I want to see how many
5 minorities have been hired over the past five, 10 years.

6 Is it pro-active or -- I'm talking about from the
7 vantage point of the board now.

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. Are they pro-active in overseeing, supervising
10 or do you just simply rubber stamp?

11 A. I don't think we rubber stamp anything. There
12 certainly has been discussion, which I've indicated
13 already, that we are concerned about more hiring and
14 gathering more applicants, and we're doing what we can do
15 there.

16 With regard to specifics, I'm not exactly sure what
17 you're referring to as far as our -- the board's role. I
18 think that the board is pro-active in its --

19 Q. But is it --

20 A. Let me finish. I think the board is pro-active
21 in its instruction that we comply with the spirit of all
22 civil rights laws.

23 Q. That's the very issue. You put your finger on
24 it. Is -- What is the board's role in terms of
25 compliance? Because I have interviewed today two --

1 Q. As it relates to hiring in this school
2 district.

3 A. Okay. As I indicated, the board is pro-active
4 and concerned with regard to the hiring of minorities. In
5 fact, we would like to have more minorities as teachers,
6 as a administrators and as staff at Crawford Central.

7 I personally have talked to Charley Heller and was
8 very satisfied with the responses that I received from
9 Charley Heller on this particular point.

10 As far as the board's role in overseeing this, the
11 board's role is this: The Civil Rights Act is a huge and
12 very involved and complex piece of legislation. We do not
13 get involved in every aspect of it.

14 However, I think that this board is quite
15 appropriately involved in its indication to the
16 administration that we require that the letter and spirit
17 of the civil rights laws be met with regard to hiring and
18 with regard to every other aspect of the civil rights
19 laws.

20 Q. Mr. Prather, you have addressed my concern to
21 this extent. You have said -- You have talked -- the
22 board discuss these issues, that's correct. And you said
23 that --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And these issues, the board has discussed. My